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The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 56 - 60

“Are you having fun, Little Ian?” “Mhm.” Both of them were sitting in a small wooden boat that could seat only a parent and a child. It wasn’t powered by anything and could only move by manually pedaling and rowing the double oars. Hence, when Sasha pedaled, Ian would use his little hands to row the oars. His face was flushed and perspiration coated his forehead, but his beautiful eyes were exceptionally bright, which was a stark contrast to his usual aloof self. Sasha smiled along with him and continued pedaling vigorously, about to bring him to play some more. Just then, her phone rang.

“Hello?” “Madam, oh my God. What were you thinking? How could you kidnap Ian and run away like that? Goodness gracious, I really can’t... Please, come back quickly or you’ll be done for!” The moment Sasha answered the call, Luke’s frenzied voice reached her ears. Her expression fell as she asked, “What’s wrong? He knows? No... I didn’t kidnap Little Ian. He didn’t want to see his grandpa, so I brought him out with me. That’s all.” *Oh God, doesn’t she understand the gravity of the situation now?* Luke didn’t bother to elaborate further. Instead, he begged her to quickly bring Ian back and said that if she didn’t, she would never be allowed to see Ian again. Sasha finally came to her senses and brought a very reluctant Ian back on shore.

“Little Ian, our fun stops here for today. You just fell sick, so you can’t play too much. Let’s go find Daddy now, okay?” “Daddy?” Ian was an immensely intelligent child, so he instantly realized that something was off by listening to his mother’s words. However, Sasha would never tell him anything she deemed inappropriate for a child’s ears. After coaxing him a little, she carried him back to the car, and they both left the amusement park, heading toward Hayes Corporation. Twenty minutes later, the car drove into the city center and approached Hayes Corporation. Then, it rolled to a stop in front of the skyscraper. After receiving the call from Luke earlier, Sasha didn’t have the inclination to go in whatsoever. From Luke’s tone, she knew for a fact that that man would make things difficult for her if she went up. Unfortunately... “Ms. Nancy?”

“Oh, alright. I will bring you up, hmm?” Sasha snapped out of her trance. Glancing at the boy beside her who still looked a little pale and sickly, she alighted the car and brought him down. “Oh, the president’s son is here. Hi, little one. I see you finally have some time to come over.” Perhaps because Sebastian often brought Ian to the company, everyone there

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knew who he was. As soon as Sasha led him in, the front desk receptionist immediately came over to greet him warmly. Ian never liked speaking, so he merely shot a fleeting glance at her. To dispel the awkwardness,

Sasha quickly answered for him, "Yes, his father asked me to bring him here. Is he in his office now?" "Oh, yes, yes. The president didn't go out this afternoon. Oh? I've never seen you before. Are you the newly hired nanny for Mr. Hayes' son? You're very young!" Unexpectedly, the receptionist posed such a question after giving Sasha a once-over. Following that, Sasha's whole body stiffened. *Nanny? Hah! Isn't that the truth though?* She didn't dare to acknowledge this child as her own at that moment. Besides, no one in this building knew that she was once the president's wife and would have been the lady boss here because their wedding back then hadn't even been announced to the public.

Sasha lowered her gaze as a self-deprecating smile played on her lips. Just when she was about to admit to being a nanny, the small hand she was holding abruptly tugged her twice. "Let's go!" Ian's eyes were extremely hostile as if someone had provoked him. Upon seeing this, Sasha did not waste a second, quickly bringing him to the elevator. Not long after, the front desk receptionist received a notice of dismissal from the Human Resource Department. The reason for her dismissal was because Ian didn't like her! Sasha brought Ian to the president's office on the highest floor. "

Ahem... Little Ian, why don't you go in on your own, hmm? I won't be going with you. Your daddy is inside, so it wouldn't be very appropriate for me to go in. Is that okay?" Sasha's reluctance to see Sebastian had steadily increased all the way here. Standing right outside his office, she finally succumbed to it. Ian looked at her and agreed, "Okay!" Then, he obediently let go of her hand and made his way into the office. Sasha was stunned. *No way. That was too easy. He really agreed? He's usually very clingy.*

Why is he so obedient all of a sudden? Sasha was rather surprised that her son had agreed so readily, but at the same time, she was beyond delighted at how smoothly things went. She slowly turned around and tiptoed toward the elevator, hoping to quickly leave this place. "Sasha! Get in here!" However, her hopes were crushed when a voice boomed from inside the office. Suddenly, her whole body was frozen to the spot, as if held by an invisible force. *How is that scum's hearing so sharp?*

Like a meek little girl, Sasha obediently approached his office. "Good afternoon, Mr. Hayes." She let out an awkward laugh. Upon stepping into the office, her eyes were immediately drawn toward the man sitting behind the large desk. In the spacious and brightly illuminated office, sunlight poured in through the French windows, creating a halo around his figure.

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Right then, he looked like a king reigning over his kingdom in his throne, so noble and lofty no one dared to look at him directly.

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Sasha subconsciously held her breath and immediately averted her gaze. "Come here, Ian." Sebastian's eyes did not immediately find Sasha when she came in. Instead, he asked his son to come over first, indicating that he would settle the scores with her later. Ian furrowed his brows and walked toward his father. "Where did you go today?" "Nowhere," Ian answered indifferently. Sasha let out a long sigh of relief. *Oh, thank God he didn't say that we went to the amusement park. Otherwise, it would only make that man angrier.* However, Sebastian didn't believe Ian when he noticed all the sweat on the latter's body.

"Then why are you sweating so much? You're even lying to me now?" Ian had no way to refute that. When Sasha realized that things were getting out of hand, she hurriedly stepped forward, forgetting about her own predicament. "Don't blame him. It's not his fault. We just... went out to play for a bit, but don't worry, he won't catch a cold. I bought a small towel for him and made sure to wipe off his sweat." Afraid that he would blow up, she quickly added in the last sentence.

"Shut up!" the man snapped at her in return. He looked like he was a second away from biting her to death with that insidious look on his face. Sasha swallowed hard. *Whatever. I'm not going to argue with this scum.* Deep down, she knew that it seemed reckless to bring Ian out when he had recently fallen sick. However, his longing gaze at that time made her heart wrench painfully in her chest. As his mother, there was no way she could bring herself to refuse him. Besides, since she was a doctor, she had considered things from all aspects and allowed him to go only after she was certain that no harm would befall him. Luckily, Sebastian found nothing wrong with him after checking his son from top to bottom.

Because he perspired quite a lot while playing at the amusement park, his cheeks were flushed a healthy shade of pink, making him glow slightly. Hence, Sebastian's expression was no longer as grim. "Alright. Mr. Scott will take you up for a shower and get your clothes changed." "Oh," Ian agreed sulkily. Soon, Luke came in to take him to the lounge room upstairs. "Daddy," Ian called out. Sebastian raised his brows in question. "Don't scold her!" Ian sternly said. Out of everyone's expectations, Ian did not forget about Sasha before being led out of the office. Sasha, who was steeling herself to receive a tongue-lashing, instantly felt warmth spreading in her heart. "Little Ian..." "Don't 'Little Ian' him anymore!"

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Sebastian snapped at her before turning to Luke. "And what are you waiting for? Take him upstairs now!" Already fuming, his anger seemed to skyrocket just then. *Ungrateful little brat. Did he forget who raised him all these years?* After Ian was taken away, silence blanketed the office, and Sasha knew that it was time to face the music. *I don't get it. Why is he so angry? All I did was take him out to play for a bit.* Sasha decided to break the silence. "Okay, I apologize for what I did. I understand that it was quite inappropriate for me to take him out, but I did it because I saw something today, and I think you owe me an explanation, Sebastian."

"What did you say? I owe you an explanation?" Sebastian never thought that before he could reprimand her for what she did today, she would question him first. Sasha nodded. "Yeah, why doesn't he like going to preschool? The weather's quite good today, so I wanted to bring him for a walk in the garden. But the moment I suggested it, he became very agitated. Then, when I brought up playing with the kids in preschool, he got all riled up and started shouting.

Sebastian, don't you think you owe me an explanation for this? How did a healthy child become like this under your care?" Silence ensued. Within a split second, the atmosphere turned almost suffocating. The sun was still shining brightly outside, its golden rays filtering through the windows. However, standing in the middle of the office, Sasha felt as if she was in the dead of winter, so cold that she shuddered involuntarily. *What's going on? Did I say something wrong?* There was a gnawing sensation in her chest. "You want me to give you an explanation, is that it?"

"Well... yes." "Very well, Sasha. I will give you just that. He became like this because you abandoned him back then. Due to his premature birth, he was critically ill and couldn't speak until he was two years old. He didn't have a mother, so I was the one who raised him. He's quiet and withdrawn because there has always been a void in his heart that only his mother could fill, causing him to constantly feel out of place and insecure wherever he goes. Is this good enough of an explanation for you?" Due to the anger coursing in his veins, Sebastian's chiseled face grew cold, with sarcasm and hostility the only emotions lining his features. As he looked at her, a mocking chuckle escaped his lips, but that rich sound was like a knife stabbing into her heart.

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What did he say? This is all my fault? Sasha was stunned with a buzzing sound in her ears. In an instant, her face drained of all color. She had never thought of this possibility. "What?

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Nothing to say? Weren't you acting all righteous just a while ago, accusing me of not taking good care of your son? Why aren't you saying anything now? Go ahead, ask me more. I promise that there's a lot more you don't know about." Faced with her silence, Sebastian's tone became harsher. His handsome face seemed to be the biggest mockery of all, and the sight of it seemed to twist the knife further into her heart, causing every cell in her body to scream in pain.

Sasha squeezed her red-rimmed eyes shut, enduring the excruciating pain in her heart. "Yes, you're right. All of this happened because I abandoned him. I admit that I have failed as a mother, but what about you, Sebastian? Are you completely innocent? If you hadn't brought that woman home when my due date was approaching, would things have turned out this way?" she refuted. She believed that if she was at fault, then he as a father was to blame as well.

Unexpectedly, as soon as she finished speaking, the man scoffed with disdain. "Are you saying that it's my fault? Have you forgotten that it was you who shamelessly wanted to marry me? If it wasn't for you, would something like this have happened? How dare you pin the blame on me? All of this sh*t started because of you!" A deafening silence shrouded the entire office. The sun continued to shine brilliantly outside, which was a stark contrast to what Sasha was feeling. She felt as if there was a hole in her chest, allowing harsh winds to gush in and chill her to the bone. All that was left in there was her bleeding heart.

The pain was so strong that gradually, her heart became numb to it. *Why is this happening? Wasn't what I suffered five years ago enough?* "Why did I come here to humiliate myself again?" Sasha's bloodless lips slowly curved into a mirthless smile. "You're right. I don't have the right to talk to you about responsibility. I was the one who shamelessly married you back then, leading to everything that has happened up till now. It's my fault, Sebastian. It's all my fault. If I could turn back time, I'd rather jump off the building with my mother than cling onto you."

Her face had gone as white as a sheet. Even then, she looked at him with a smile on her face, one that was filled with regret, as she told him that if given a choice, she would rather die than meet him again. Sebastian's mind went blank. He had never seen this look on her face, let alone heard her say such words. *Why does she look like that?* There was once when she loved him deeply. Even when he showed up with Xandra five years ago and she collapsed in a pool of her own blood, her eyes still gleamed with sorrow and despair when she looked at him. But now, he couldn't discern any emotion in them.

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She was like a desolate and barren land. Besides her pale complexion, her face showed nothing. Like a star winking out of existence, only emptiness remained. Sebastian squeezed the pen between his fingers. "Oh? Mr. Hayes, Ms. Wand, you're both still here. Umm... Ian is done with his shower, but he doesn't want to wear his clothes. He wants... Ms. Wand to go upstairs." Just when the temperature in the office seemed to have reached sub-zero, Luke pushed open the door and came in, saying that Ian didn't want his help in dressing up. Sasha's face was colorless and her heart had frozen in her chest, but when she heard that her son was looking for her, she regained some semblance of rationality. "Is something wrong with him?"

"I'm... I'm not too sure either. He just doesn't want to come out of the bathroom and keeps asking for you. Maybe his stomach is acting up again?" Luke made a guess. Upon hearing this, Sasha's expression changed drastically. Not bothering to continue arguing with Sebastian, she immediately picked up her feet and left.

At the end of the day, she was still a mother. No matter what she was going through, as soon as she heard that something had happened to her child, she locked away all her scars and rushed to find him. Glancing at the man behind the desk who was staring after the woman, Luke heaved a long sigh. ... Sasha reached the lounge room upstairs. Indeed, Ian had ordered Luke to go down and get his mommy because he knew that his daddy would never listen to him and bully his mommy. If Matteo were to find out about this, he would definitely be angry. Hence, Ian had asked Luke to go down. After the latter left, Ian took the opportunity to call Matteo using his smartwatch. "Hello? Ian, is that you?"

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Matteo, who was in preschool at that time, had been wanting to give Ian a call. Ever since he heard from his mommy that morning that Ian had fallen ill, he had been feeling guilty and worried. He thought about calling Ian to ask how he was doing. Unfortunately, he did not have the courage to do so, for fear that this brother would not answer his call. Luckily, Ian called him first. Matteo was delighted. "Ian, I'm sorry. I didn't know stopping Mommy from going to your place would cause you to fall sick. Are you okay? I really didn't mean it. I got upset after seeing Daddy bullying Mommy, and I don't ever want Mommy to be with a man like him. Ian, do you get me?"

Matteo apologized to his twin over the phone. After listening to him, Ian paused momentarily before he nodded. "Yeah." Matteo sounded grateful. "Thank God you

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understand! That's great, Ian!" "But," Ian had more things to say. "I want to see Mommy too. Matt, can you give Daddy another chance?" This was the first time he managed to form several sentences at once. The fact that his tone carried a hint of grief and desperation made it even rarer. Matteo was stunned. *Give bad Daddy another chance?* Of course he wanted his daddy and mommy to be together. He also wanted to have a father by his side. That way, their family would be complete. But he knew that his daddy was a really nasty man. The other day,

Matteo was bursting with anger when he saw him bullying his mommy. Matteo deliberated for quite some time on the phone. Nevertheless, Ian patiently waited for his reply on the other line. In the end, Matteo finally agreed to his request. "Okay, we'll give him one more chance then. But remember, you must not let him bully Mommy again. Also, report to me if anything happens, do you understand?" "Alright!" Ian agreed as well before he hung up the phone with satisfaction. For the first time, there was a faint smile on his usually emotionless face. Sasha knew nothing about the little secret between her two sons.

After she came upstairs and noticed that the bathroom lights were still on, she quickly composed her emotions. Warm light emitted from the gap of the closed bathroom door, and the silhouette of a small figure could be seen crouching on the floor in there. *What's he doing? Is he doing that because he doesn't feel safe?* Seeing him like this, Sasha's heart wrenched in pain. She sprinted to the sofa and quickly retrieved a set of clothes for Ian to change into.

She called out to him outside the door, "Little Ian? Little Ian? It's me, Ms. Nancy. Can I come in?" "No!" At that moment, Ian was actually trying to put on his underwear in the bathroom. He was so nervous that beads of sweat were already trickling down his flushed cheeks. He was not Matteo, who had been independent since he was much younger. Matteo did not require anyone to help him get dressed, among other basic tasks. On the other hand, Ian was the young master of a rich family whose daily routines had been taken care of since he was a baby. Hence, he was not accustomed to getting dressed on his own. Fortunately, after a little struggle, he finally managed to put on his underwear.

He did not have to feel ashamed in front of his mommy anymore. Only then did he announce from the bathroom, "You can come in now." Sasha had been waiting anxiously outside. This was the first time she had to personally help her eldest son get dressed. She actually felt both excited and blessed to be able to do so. Moreover, she was worried that he would be scared while he was inside. When Sasha was finally given the green light to enter, she quickly opened the door and burst into the bathroom, holding the stack of clothes in her hand. "Little Ian? You..." Surprisingly, after coming in, she found that her son had

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disappeared behind the shower curtain. Only the back of his head could be seen. *What's this kid doing?* Suspicion glinted in Sasha's eyes, and she hurried over to check on him. Standing behind Ian, she asked him gently, "Ian, is there something wrong?"

"Why are you hiding?" Ian's face stiffened. "You... don't look!" *Huh? Don't look?* Sasha finally understood why Ian was behaving so strangely. As she stood there, with her previous confusion vanished, she could not help but chuckle, "So our Little Ian is actually quite shy. That's alright. Do you see what I have here? I've brought you a big bath towel. We'll wrap you up in this and then get you into some clothes. How does that sound?" Sasha waved the bath towel in front of the boy. Behind the shower curtain, Ian stayed quiet. *Wrap my whole body?* Eventually, his little head poked out from behind the curtain. His face had turned red because of the water vapor in the bathroom. His pair of dark, charming eyes resembled his father's as they sparkled like that of a vigilant kitten. "Give it to me." "Oh, alright, here you go!" Sasha then passed the bath towel to him.

The experience she had as a mother came in handy. She had already foreseen the situation in the bathroom before coming in. And so, Ian came out of the bathroom wrapped in the big bath towel. Thanks to her quick thinking, Sasha successfully helped her son dress up for the first time. Additionally, she also found a good excuse to turn over the underwear he had put on wrongly in the bathroom. After Ian was properly dressed, both mother and son stepped out of the bathroom. "Little Ian, do you... want to stay here?" Now that Ian was done with his shower, she thought about leaving again, refusing to stay in this place a moment longer.

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However, instead of responding to her question, he went to the TV cabinet in the living room, where he rummaged for a large set of Lego blocks and began to play with them on his own. Sasha was stupefied by his actions. *It's like he's telling me that he doesn't want to go back. Now what? Do I... just leave him here?* It should be fine if Ian did not want to return. This place seemed to be fully equipped with everything the boy needed, as though it was exclusively prepared for him. Furthermore, when she brought him here the last time she came over to deliver medicine, hadn't he stayed with that man the whole afternoon? Hence, Sasha chose to let him be for now. She planned to head downstairs and inform Luke before going back.

However, what irked her was that when she came down, not only was Luke not in the president's office, but the man she loathed the most was also nowhere to be seen. *Where*

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did they go? She was getting agitated as she could not find Luke and did not know where he had gone to. *What now? Should I go look for him again?* Sasha's frustration was building up. Right then, the phone on Sebastian's desk rang. *Ring, ring...* Sasha paused in her tracks for a moment, then turned to leave. It was impossible for her to be bothered with phone calls right now, especially when she did not even want to meet the owner of the office she was currently in or spare the man a glance. So why would she even care about his affairs?

All of a sudden, a small figure appeared across from her, "Answer the phone!" "What?" Sasha whipped her head around, surprised to see her son, who seemed to have followed her without her knowing. Ian looked up at her. "Daddy's phone calls are very important. We can go home after you answer it!" Still holding onto the Lego blocks, the boy stepped into the office. Sasha deliberated with herself. *Fine, I'll see who's calling so that I can take him home after this.*

Sasha picked up the phone and greeted, "Hello." "Hello!" Surprisingly, after the call got through, the caller on the other end spoke in Jetroinian. Arching her eyebrows, Sasha replied in fluent Jetroinian, "Good day, how can I help you?" When the other party heard that Sasha could also speak Jetroinian, they were quite pleased. Meanwhile, the little boy playing with Lego blocks in the room also turned to look at her. *Wow, silly Mommy is so awesome!* "

Good day, Mr. Hayes. I am Matsushima Oka, chairman of Nikkawa-Gen. I would like to inform you that I have received the acquisition contract issued by your company and that I agree to sell Nikkawa-Gen to the Hayes Corporation!" The speaker was fluent in Jetroinian too. From the sound of it, he must be a native Jetroinian. When Sasha heard that, she grabbed a piece of paper and a pen to take notes. "Yes, sir. However, I am not Mr. Hayes. He has stepped out at the moment. Would you like me to leave a message for him?" Her patience was running thin. And so, Matsushima Oka started, "Alright, thank you, miss. Please deliver this message to him. I have a little request which I hope Mr. Hayes can agree to.

You see, Nikkawa-Gen is a family business passed down from generation to generation in the Matsushima family, so I don't want this family legacy to end like that. After Mr. Hayes' acquisition, I'd like to use all the funds to buy some of the shares and become one of the new shareholders. Is that possible?" The scribbling stopped right then. *Are all businessmen nowadays so shameless? It's like someone asking to occupy a room of the house they've sold and share part of its ownership.* Sasha sneered, "Mr. Matsushima, you have crossed the line with that request. Since you have decided to sell your company to the Hayes Corporation, there is no reason for us to make you one of the shareholders, no matter how we look at it.

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What's the difference between this approach and looking to the Hayes Corporation for financing needs?" "What did you say?"

The Jetroinian man did not expect that the request he made would be summed up by a regular employee so bluntly and accurately. In a split second, he got somewhat irritated. *Is the Hayes Corporation that great? So much so that even a regular employee knows so much about finance?* "Did I say something wrong? You're selling the company, and yet you intend to become one of the shareholders yourself. What is this if not financing? Let me tell you, if you really want to raise funds, you don't need to seek out the Hayes Corporation. Sebastian Hayes is not an idiot. He won't be fooled by you. You should take your GDP to Wall Street for a spin. Maybe get an analyst who's willing to help you gain more bang for the buck. Do you hear me?" Sasha explained herself clearly, then hung up the phone! Ian was rendered speechless. *Is Mommy scolding someone else? Has Mommy just ruined Daddy's business? I guess it doesn't matter since he bullied her first. Let this be his punishment then.*

The little boy withdrew his gaze from his mother and went on to play with the Lego blocks. Ten minutes later, Sasha left the company and returned home with Ian. About three o'clock in the afternoon, Sebastian finally returned to the company after ending a meeting with one of his clients. "Mr. Hayes, we have a problem. The chairman of the Jetroinian machinery company that we intended to acquire has promptly decided not to sell the firm to us. What should we do now?" Sebastian had just returned to the office when the company's vice president, who was in charge of marketing, came looking for him while uttering cries of anguish.

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